
First language spoken

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Identifying and Definitional Attributes

Data Dictionary: NHADD
Knowledgebase ID: 000748 Version number: 1
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT
Registration Authority: NHDAMG Admin status: SUPERSEDED
Effective date: 01-MAR-05

Definition: The language the person identifies, or remembers, as being the first language that they could understand to the extent of being able to conduct a conversation.

Context: Persons whose first language is not English have been identified by service providers as a population group that may experience disadvantage when seeking to obtain equal access to government and community programs and services in Australia. Data relating to First language spoken may thus provide a surrogate indicator of disadvantage potentially associated with a lack of English competence or with other factors associated with cultural background.
This variable provides accurate information about a person's cultural and Linguistic background, as First Language spoken does not change over a person's lifetime.

Relational and Representational Attributes

Datatype: Alphanumeric
Representational form: CODE
Representation layout: NNNN
Minimum Size: 2
Maximum Size: 4

Data Domain: NOVAL Data collected should be mappable to the ABS Australian Standard Classification of Languages, 1997, Cat. No. 1267.0.
This is a 4-digit code based on a hierarchical structure and includes codes for Indigenous Australian languages and sign language. There is

also an adaptation of this classification to accommodate a 2-digit running code.

Collection Methods: The standard question for obtaining detailed data for First Language Spoken is as follows:
Which language (did you) (did the person) first speak as a child?
(Mark one box only)
English Italian
Greek Cantonese
Mandarin Arabic
Vietnamese German
Spanish Tagalog (filipino)
Other - please specify: _____
Alternately, a shorter version can be used:
Which language (did you) (did the person) first speak as a child?
(Mark one box only)
Australia
Other - please specify: _____

Related metadata: relates to the data element Country of birth version 1
relates to the data element Interpreter services required version 1
relates to the data element Main language spoken at home version 1
relates to the data element Proficiency in Spoken English version 1

Administrative Attributes

Source Document: ABS: Directory of concepts and standards for social, labour and demographic statistics, 1995
Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian Standard Classification of Languages, 1997, Cat. No. 1267.0.

Source Organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Data Element Links

Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element

Data Agreements which include this Data Element
